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# Behavioral Impact of Climate Change on Consumers, Understanding the Science behind Environmental Consciousness

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## ABSTRACT

*In order to attain sustainable development to safeguard our environment and society, an increasing number of researchers have conducted in-depth research on green marketing and green purchases. Green consumerism embodies a dilemma inherent in many prosocial and moral actions – foregoing personal gain in favour of a more abstract, somewhat intangible gain to someone or something else. In recent years, consumers tend to pay more attention to the green products. Green consumers decision to get green products is becoming a central issue within the present state of green market research due to the rising of environmental consciousness and green consumption trends worldwide.*

*Supported with the Theory of Planned Behaviour, the intention of performing such behaviour is influenced by three main components of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control. However, there are many factors that significantly affect the consumer's intention towards green purchasing. Among them are socio demographic variables, awareness, experience and knowledge about green products, parental influence and peer's belief, and merchandise price and quality.*

*This paper comprehensively deals with the rise in Green Consumerism due to increasing awareness about Climate Change and the factors contributing Green Behaviour in consumers.*

**Keywords:** *Green Products, Sustainability, Consumerism, Environmental Consciousness.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, relationships between consumers and producers have changed considerably. Within the west, as an example, consumers are increasingly moving beyond the normal norm of 'value for money' in selecting products and services and have begun to incorporate other criteria like 'value for people' and 'value for the environment'. The drive behind those changed attitudes and actions is that the growing public awareness that

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wasteful lifestyles and over-consumption have extremely serious consequences for the environment.

In adopting environmentally sustainable lifestyles and consumption patterns, more and more consumers are now exercising their powers to shop for or boycott a specific product or service on the idea of its environment friendly character. As echoed within the Ohmiya Declaration on Creating Our Future Now, we'd like a replacement consumer society, one during which people plan to consume products and services based not only on their price, quality, durability, performance and aftersales service, but on ecological and ethical considerations also.

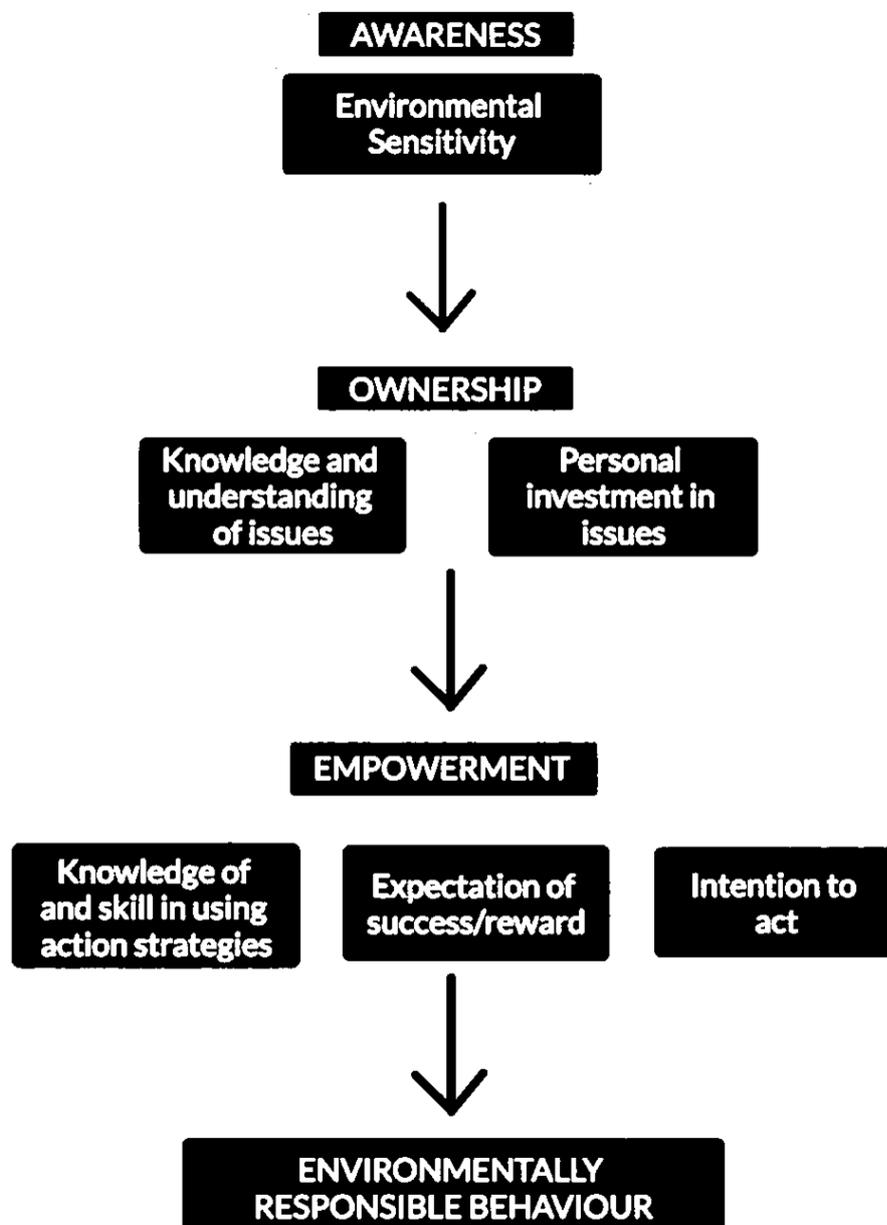
Rising of environmental consciousness and green consumption trends have pointed to a critical need for marketing research for this emerging market. The growing consumer awareness of the environmental issue has changed consumption patterns towards sustainable products and services. As consumers became increasingly conscious of environmental concerns, they need more intention to get green products. Moreover, prior research argued consumers are more likely to get eco-friendly products due to environmental and social benefits, and are willing to pay more for sustainable products. Consumers purchase green products to attenuate harmful environmental impacts by protecting natural resources, reducing energy use and waste and improving health and safety. Hence, international IEC 62075 standard was gazetted to include environmental and other market demands.

It has been demonstrated that the demand of green products is increasing day by day everywhere the planet and intrinsically there's concern for understanding how green may be a green product. One among the foremost important restrains to the event of green products is that the lack of consumer trust and therefore the lack of data. This shows us that consumer's attitude and perception play a crucial role in promoting the green product.

Since 1990, there are myriad of research are done on analysing the buyer attitude towards green products at academics also as industrial level. whilst thinking "green" is increasingly at the forefront of consumers' minds, they still struggle with their role within the lifecycle of products with an environmental benefit. Moreover, consumers seem to possess limited capability to verify the liability of green products. Environmental concern and brand knowledge are likely to be both two critical factors that influence consumers' green products purchasing intention.

**Figure 1: Summarised 'Education for Environmentally Responsible Behaviour' Model**

(adapted from Hungerford and Volk, 1990)



## II. GREEN CONSUMERISM

### (A) The Rise of Green Consumerism

A new term, '*green consumerism*' has inherited vogue and is increasingly getting used lately. As a matter of fact, the term, 'green consumerism' eludes a particular, precise and scientific definition. However, broadly 'green consumerism' means a consumption pattern with an environmental consciousness. From this standpoint, 'green consumerism' involves people in actions to guard and promote the environment by deliberately avoiding certain categories of

products and services, like those which:

- Endanger the standard of the environment or the security of other consumers;
- Cause environmental degradation during the extraction of natural resources, or during their manufacture, use or disposal;
- Cause unnecessary waste, either due to overpackaging or due to an unduly short life span;
- Adversely affect other countries and communities, especially those within the South.

‘Green consumerism’ certainly has the potential to significantly reduce the strain on our surroundings. Therefore, the selection between ‘green’ and ‘ungreen’ consumerism should be obvious to anyone who cares about the longer term. But there is certain crucial limitation to the success which will be achieved by a person’s firm dedication thereto choice. the development of a far better world requires not only individual actions, but also collective actions and political and institutional restructuring supported a sound understanding of the bounds of growth and therefore the concept of ecological sustainability.

While many environmental problems are often linked to current consumption patterns, it is not justifiable to carry consumers entirely liable for them, or to expect that they will solve those problems by themselves. Neither can it's expected that each one the required changes will come from consumers. A responsibility clearly lies with governments to scale back the extent of environmental degradation even before consumers start making choices. during this connection, the role of consumer organisation and environmental groups also can hardly be over emphasised.

### **(B) Green Consumers**

In recent years, consumers tend to pay more attention to the products that are environmentally and socially responsible as there are getting educated and have a good exposure to environmentally friendly products. Consumer’s mindfulness about obliteration and depletion of environmental resources through irresponsible activities have outstretched the difficulty of environmental protection, consumption pattern and buying activities. Consumers who take under consideration the environmental impact on their consumption pattern and willing to vary their purchasing behaviour are often considered green consumers.

Green consumers are those that are always purchase the merchandise which bringing the less impact to environment consistently. These consumers may specialise in brand product which is eco-friendly packaging and company who practicing the fair trade or environmental

practices also. Furthermore, green purchase intention is conceptualized because the probability and willingness of an individual which are like better to purchase products that having eco-friendly features over other non-green products in their purchase considerations.

Green consumers decision to get green products is becoming a central issue within the present state of green market research. The acquisition decision is often traced from the consumer's enthusiasm to support environmentally friendly companies, performing the purchasing activities, putting into practice a sustainable consumption pattern, and willingness to spend extra money to accumulate green products.

### **(C) Green Products**

In general, green product is meant or manufactured during a manner on minimize the environmental impact involved in its production, distribution and consumption. This might involve the utilization of recyclable materials, biodegradable elements and components. In fact, there are several characteristics that a product must need to be considered a "green" product. Numerous criteria are presented below:

- Easily reused
- Made using natural and/or renewable resources
- Contains recycled content
- Readily recycled
- Biodegradable
- Energy efficient
- Durable with low maintenance requirements

To conclude, green products are often described because the products with less impact on the environment and fewer detrimental to human health than their alternatives (Shrum et al., 1995). The growing public awareness of the environmental degradation that has resulted within the operation of green marketing or environmentally responsible practice for the firms in some industries. Some businesses engage in green marketing because such a stress will enable them to form a profit.

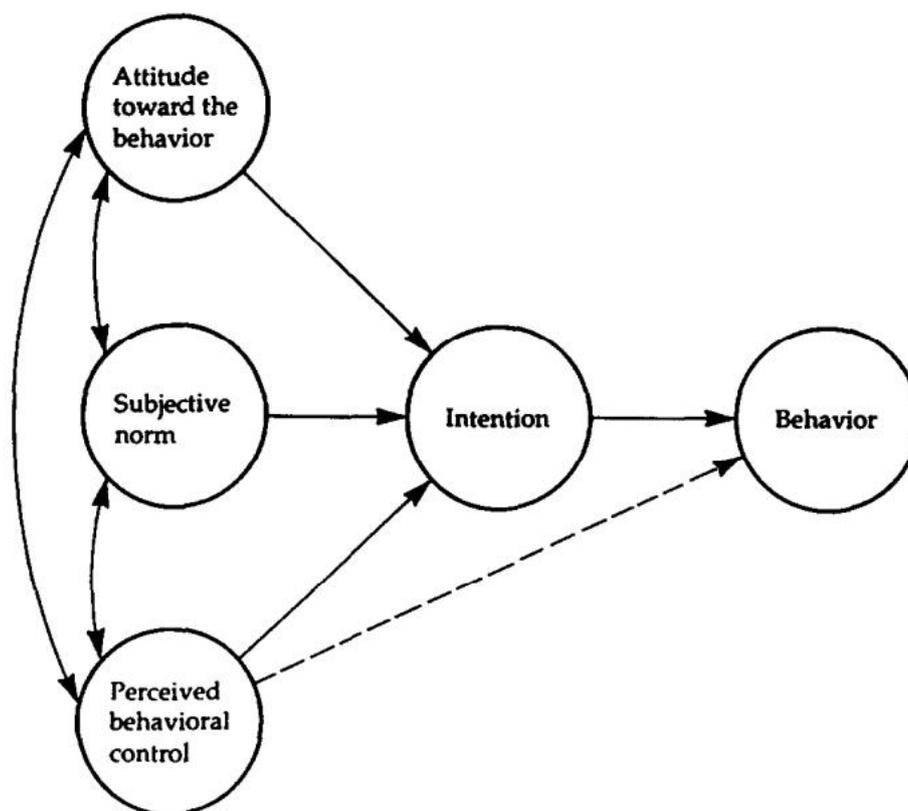
In business, the terms 'Green product' and 'Environmental product' are used commonly to explain people who strive to guard or enhance the natural environment by conserving energy and/or resources and reducing or eliminating use of toxic agents, pollution, and waste (J. Ottman,1997). It's also referred as a product that's environmentally preferable relative to

comparable products.

### III. WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS GREEN CONSUMERISM

#### (A) Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (“TPB”) is an extension of the idea of reasoned action made necessary by the first model’s limitations in handling behaviours over which individuals have incomplete volitional control. Figure 2 depicts the idea within the sort of a structural diagram. For simple presentation, possible feedback effects of behaviour on the antecedent variables aren't shown. As within the original theory of reasoned action, a central think about the idea of planned behaviour is that the individual’s intention to perform a given behaviour. Intentions are assumed to capture the motivational factors that influence a behaviour; they're indications of how hard people are willing to undertake, of what proportion of an attempt they're getting to exert, so as to perform the behaviour. As a general rule, the stronger the intention to interact during a behaviour, the more likely should be its performance.



*Figure 2: Theory of Planned Behaviour*

Based on the idea of the TBP, the intention of performing the precise behaviour (in this study purchasing green product) is influenced by three main components of attitude, subjective norm,

and perceived behavioural control. The attitude of consumers towards the environment or healthy lifestyle could affect their intention to get green products. as an example, during a study on green purchasing in Malaysia. It had been observed that the socio demographic variables of educational level, income level, age and legal status significantly affect the consumer's intention towards green purchasing.

### **(B) Application of TPB on Green Consumerism**

Experience and knowledge about green products are often reason for the consumers to get green products. Study done by Chang and Fong (2010) made a survey of the consumers who had experienced purchasing green or environmental products in Taiwan and located that green product quality and green corporate image could bring green customer satisfaction and green customer loyalty. Hence, it was suggested that if business offer environmentally friendly products to consumers with affordable prices and top quality as compared to traditional products, along these consumers have positive intentions to get green products, green product purchase is going to be high.

Moreover, Chase and Smith (1992) also revealed that 70% of the buyer purchase decisions were influenced by environmental protection message given in advertising and merchandise labelling. Green awareness has become one among the explanations for consumers to point out their responsibility to guard the environment before purchasing activities. They appreciate products which are less harmful to human, animal, environment and most significantly, recyclable. Generally, consumers engage in green products for the advantages of environmental improvement they sleep in, to some extent consumers with green awareness in mind also willing to pay extra because they understand the environmental benefits which will be gained from the merchandise.

In fact, consumer's environmental awareness, passionate and perception towards deteriorating quality of environment have made them to behave environmentally friendly, which successively, change their purchasing activities towards green products. In some cases, direct personal benefits, like perceived health advantages of organic foods or the energy saving of an eco-friendly air conditioning, are mostly observed. Chen and Chang (2012) inspected the roles of green perceived value, green perceived risk, and therefore the mediating effect of green trust on the green purchase intention of data and technology products in Taiwan.

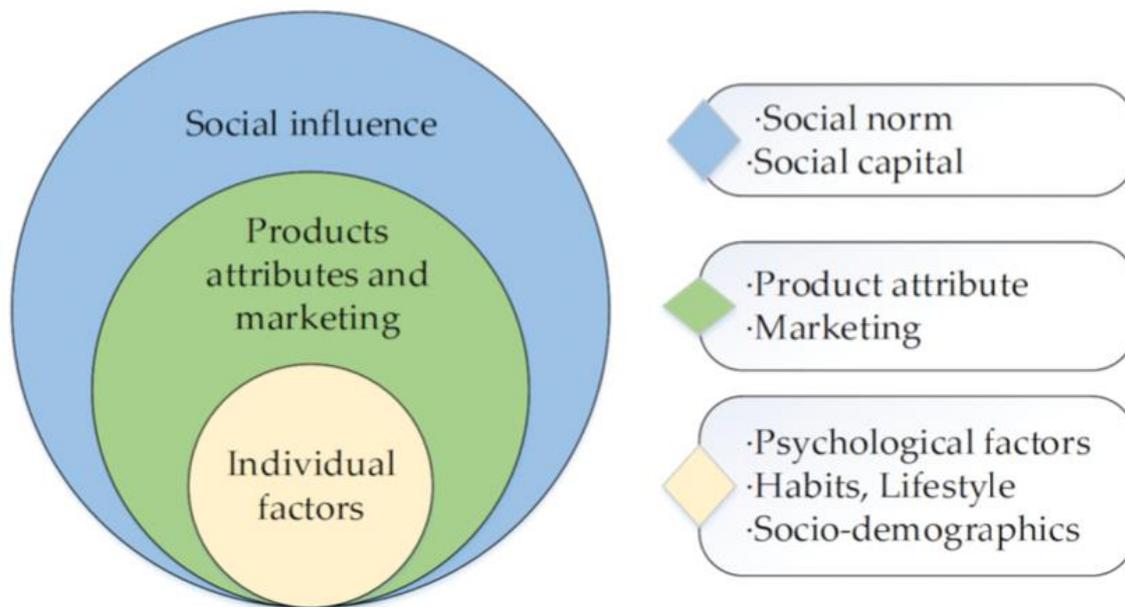
The psychology studies on green purchase behaviour including indicate that the socio-demographic characteristics aged, gender, income, legal status, income level, and academic level are influential factors on green products purchasing. as an example, during

a study on green purchasing in Malaysia. It had been observed that the socio demographic variables of educational level, income level, age and legal status significantly affect the respondents' intention towards green purchasing.

### (C) Determinants of Green Purchase

Most of the papers reviewed during this study regard green purchase behaviour as a rational behaviour of consumers to guard the environment at the expense of a part of their personal interests. As shown in Figure 3, the research work focuses on the consumer's psychological factors (e.g., attitude, values, mores, norms), behaviour habits and lifestyle (e.g., past purchase behaviour, knowledge), also as socio-demographic influences (e.g., age, gender, education, occupation) on consumers' green product choices.

Of course, consumers cannot buy products just supported their own likes and dislikes. the merchandise quality, attributes, and marketing strategies of companies are all factors that buyers should concentrate to when choosing green products. Taking green food as an example, consumers specialise in food safety and health, but consumers are more concerned about style and personality in terms of clothing.



**Figure 3: Classification of Determinants of Green Purchase**

However, the formation of consumer values is closely associated with their living environment, because we all sleep in groups, which indicates that individual factors and merchandise attributes cannot fully explain the buyer attitude behaviour gap. Therefore, scholars have included more macro factors, like the social development, production structure, and culture, in

their research. The authors classify the influencing factors involved in empirical articles into three categories: individual factors, products attributes and marketing, and social influence (Figure 3), and that they discuss them intimately.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Individuals round the world have expressed their commitment to living more eco-friendly lifestyles. Supporting the green product movement will help ensure this manner of living continues to be possible and it starts with purchasing truly green products. Consumer environmental concern is seen to extend when consumption behaviour becomes more geared towards environmentally-sensitive goods and services, and consumers change their purchasing behaviour to become greener.

Although the amount of people willing to get green products has increased within the previous couple of years, there's little evidence to suggest that purchase of green products has increased; despite environmental concern and positive attitude of consumers towards sustainability and green products, market share of green products remains confined to only 1-3% of the whole market.

Market change is a slow process, and for making the same green, it will require people from around the world to create a demand for green products and also green production methods, in order to compel the market to shift. Independent factors as environmental knowledge, environmental concern, perceived knowledge, organizational green image and social influence always reflect within the mind of consumers as green perception. These factors also will help in making a world more green and harmless with sustainable development.

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